

THE
JOURNAL OF
THE
ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE
OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND
VOLUME 100 PART 1 2000

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The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland is a peer-reviewed journal of research in human evolution, primatology, and human biology. It is published quarterly by the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland. The journal covers a wide range of topics, including human evolution, primatology, and human biology. It is a leading journal in the field of human evolution and primatology.

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five by France, and one by China.

In 1979 the American Early Warning System somehow read a military computer war game as a live missile launch, putting the defense chain on low-level alert and sending Air Force jets aloft. It took six minutes to discover the error.

These days missiles equipped with computer guidance systems that launch on warning can reach their destination in less than ten minutes. And in 1984 some 256 "serious errors" occurred, with the number allegedly increasing every year.

Billions of dollars are being spent to support the largest peacetime military buildup in the history of the United States. According to the Center for Defense Information (CDI), nearly 70 percent of every federal dollar that's allotted to research and development goes to the military.

In the light of this darkness stands the peace movement. If the word peace sparks memories of flowers, love beads, and Vietnam for dinner, tune in.

Peace in the Eighties has become a global issue. In Western Europe political

parties with peace platforms—most notably West Germany's Green Party—are beginning to achieve electoral success. And demonstrations draw hundreds of thousands of people: Even in Iron Curtain countries like Romania, peace rallies have attracted up to 400,000 supporters.

A 1986 peace conference in Kingston, Jamaica, observed the United Nations' International Year of Peace by proposing that the Caribbean be declared an official peace zone. A veritable playground for war games, the Caribbean has been the scene of an intensive military buildup and a large number of military bases.

During that year dedicated to peace, a two-day rock concert in Tokyo attracted 32,000 people to hear musical artists from Japan, Africa, Europe, the Soviet Union, and the United States. Peter Gabriel, Howard Jones, Lou Reed, Jackson Browne, and others joined together to raise worldwide peace consciousness. And proceeds from the concert were earmarked for the establishment of a computer-based information network at Costa Rica's University for

Peace. The purpose of the United Nations-supported university is the teaching, researching, and promotion of peace.

A small but growing number of Sephardic Jews in the Middle East are also working for peace through groups like *Hamizrah el Hashalom* (East for Peace). Because Israel is a Middle Eastern country, group members believe shared heritage and cultural links make them better able to coexist and negotiate with Palestinians, for example, than Western Jews who have resettled in the region.

In the Soviet Union approximately 80 million people belong to the official Soviet Peace Committee. While many Americans shrug that off as national obligation, other groups like the unofficial Moscow Trust Group have survived repression long enough to spawn a movement of their own. Soviet space scientist Boris Rauschenbach points out that scientists, doctors, and educators conduct their own specific campaigns. "They do not hold rallies and demonstrations, but they do very serious, in-depth, and independent research into

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PEACE AMONG THE STARS

When the world's most powerful nations are at odds, the world is in a state of tension. The world is a big place, and it is full of people who are looking for peace. The world is a big place, and it is full of people who are looking for peace. The world is a big place, and it is full of people who are looking for peace.

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PEACE

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the problems of war and the prospects for peace," he says.

In the United States the movement is burgeoning. In 1983, 1,450 peace groups existed; today there are at least 7,000, including organizations of scientists, physicians, and computer professionals. Efforts are also under way to establish an American peace party like West Germany's. Many of these groups are using high technology to broaden their base, unify efforts, and develop sophisticated strategies for realizing their goals.

While American peace movements of the past have revolved around single issues, the Eighties have witnessed a broader perspective. Civil disobedience, the Freeze Campaign, and citizen diplomacy have emerged in response to nuclear testing and weapons production, intervention in Central America, chaos in the Middle East, war-torn Afghanistan, South African apartheid, the lack of an arms treaty or bilateral nuclear freeze, and other issues. "At the very least, we learned in the Sixties that the government is vulnerable to only one thing: outraged public opinion," says Philip Berrigan, who with his brother Daniel and others was one of the "Catonsville Nine" convicted of burning draft records in the Maryland suburb in the Sixties.

On San Francisco's Sacramento Street, just four blocks from the Presidio military base, there is a door almost hidden between a basket shop and a movie theater. On it are the words SAN FRANCISCO-MOSCOW TELEPORT painted in small black letters. Inside, a two-room flat serves as headquarters for the nonprofit teleport, one of the first high-tech ventures to emerge from the peace movement.

A self-described "cultural repairman," whose long hair and beard have caused some to liken him to Moses, Joel Schatz is confirming the phone lines reserved for today's teleportation. "Did you know," he asks, "that all calls from the United States to the Soviet Union go through Pittsburgh on an old-fashioned switchboard?"

A videophone sits on Schatz's desk, along with a television that broadcasts Soviet programming picked up from the Molniya satellite. Located two doors away, the receiving dish is part of the Washington Research Institute, a nonprofit organization funded by toy company heir Henry S. Dakin and aimed at promoting mutual understanding and respect.

Schatz first visited the Soviet Union in 1983 for a firsthand look at America's major adversary. "Basically, my motivation was the existence of missiles aimed at each other's populations," Schatz recalls. "It seemed outrageous that two countries capable of annihilating each other, not to mention the planet, many times over should

have such appalling channels of communication between their populations."

On his return, Schatz bought a Radio Shack Model 100 laptop computer. He then sent a telex to Soviet Academy of Science vice president Yevgeny Velikhov and suggested a direct computer link between the two countries for scientific exchanges. The computer link was activated in June 1985. The first successful test of the videophone was conducted one month later.

Today the teleport links physicians from the Harvard School of Public Health and the Soviet Ministry of Health as well as the Soviet Space Research Institute to combat disease in the Third World. The teleport is even teaming *The San Francisco Examiner* and the Soviet newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (Young People's Pravda). And Dallas and Soviet fashion-design groups are developing a Soviet-American fashion line. Although they suspect that the teleport's connections are monitored by both Soviet and American officials, Schatz and others don't expect interference, as long as they aren't discussing sensitive information or the transfer of "controlled or embargoed" technology.

"The future of our species is bound totally to technological ingenuity," Schatz says. "The ENIAC [Electronic Numerical Integrator and Calculator] computer was operational the year after we destroyed Hiroshima. The race now is between communications and nuclear annihilation."

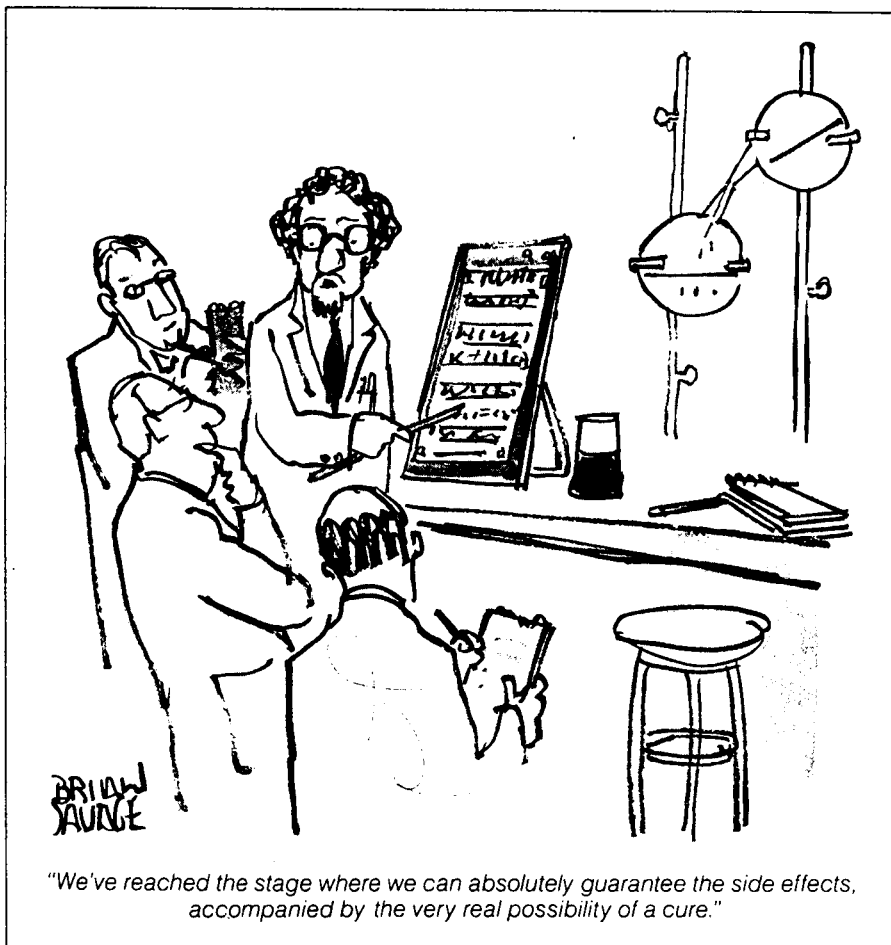
Speaking for the Union of Designers in Moscow via videophone, Boris Rauschenbach applauds the connection but believes technology is vastly underutilized. "We are just beginning to tap its potential in the peace movement," he says.

Yuri Soloviev, president of the Society of Soviet Designers, adds, "Technological progress is now occurring so rapidly that soon Russians and Americans will be able to use telecommunications systems to interface with one another from their homes."

Historically, peace has been defined within the confines of national boundaries. But the world has changed. Travel and technology have made the planet a much smaller place, and the rapid increase in nuclear arsenals has made it more vulnerable to obliteration.

The concept of peace includes social, economic, and cultural achievements as well as protection of the environment. So groups like the international organization Greenpeace focus not only on nuclear disarmament but also on the ecological forces threatening the earth, including the potential for nuclear reactor accidents. While not every opponent of nuclear arms also opposes nuclear energy, serious activists in the peace movement find the dangers of both unacceptable.

Increasingly, power in the international arena is being defined not militarily but economically. Japan and West Germany spend minute amounts on weapons and defense, whereas the Soviet Union and the United States account for nearly 60 per-



cent of the world's military budget and are both suffering sagging economies.

Peace campaigns in this century have been waged in response to World Wars I and II as well as to the threat of Fascism in the Thirties. The anticommunist crusade initiating the Cold War in the late Forties and fueled by Senator Joseph McCarthy and the House Un-American Activities Committee in the early Fifties, however, all but obliterated what was left of the peace movement. Then came Vietnam.

Led primarily by students, the antiwar movement of the Sixties was the most successful peace campaign to date, largely responsible for stopping the escalation of the Vietnam War.

By 1975, with the fall of Saigon and the evacuation of American troops and personnel, the antiwar movement, for all intents and purposes, was over. "Everybody took some kind of break in the Seventies," says folksinger Joan Baez. "I for one had blown my tubes out, and I was hurt that the war had gone on for so long. I was hurt to some degree that the people who really stopped it were neither given nor taking credit for it, including myself."

America's nuclear energy and weapons policies, the accident at Three Mile Island, and Jimmy Carter's Presidential Directive 59, which planned for a possible first-strike nuclear war, soon touched the collective nerve of peace activists. Demonstrations and rallies at nuclear power plants, test sites, and weapons facilities increased, with hundreds—and eventually thousands—arrested for acts of civil disobedience, successfully preventing the construction of any new nuclear reactors.

"It's only been within the last two years that civil disobedience has become more acceptable as a form of protest for most people," says Charlie Hilfenhaus, national staff member of the American Peace Test, an activist group that organizes demonstrations and actions against nuclear testing. "Traditionally it has been a fringe phenomenon, but people are now thinking it's time to do something more than what they've done in the past."

Since 1984 an estimated average of 3,500 people a year have been arrested for acts of civil disobedience, according to *Nuclear Resister* coeditor and publisher Jack Cohen-Joppa, who says the number is increasing. The varied ranks of civil disobedience activists include former Defense Department analyst and war games specialist Daniel Ellsberg; singer-songwriter Kris Kristofferson; astronomer Carl Sagan; the mayor and city council members of Santa Monica, California; and Detroit's auxiliary bishop Thomas Gumbleton, one of the first Catholic bishops arrested for civil disobedience.

Civil disobedience forces the government and the public to pay attention to the issues at hand. "History has shown—in the abolitionist movement, women's vote, unionization, civil rights—that you don't win without this kind of effort," Ellsberg says.

"It stimulates other actions like lobbying and congressional and media investigations. The pressure of people putting their bodies on the line and going to jail uniquely raises the moral issue of urgency."

Some proponents of civil disobedience have gone beyond simple trespassing and disorderly conduct. The Plowshare movement, endorsed by Catholic priests Daniel and Philip Berrigan and others, is motivated by the prophecies of Isaiah 2:4—"They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." There have been Plowshare actions—hammered missile nose cones, blood on documents, and other symbolic acts—at such locations as the General Dynamics Electric Boat shipyard in Groton, Connecticut; Martin Marietta in Orlando, Florida; and the Sperry Corporation in Eagan, Minnesota.

"There will be more acts of sabotage,

● In the
light of this darkness stands
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movement. If the word peace
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memories of flower power, love
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Vietnam for dinner, tune in. ●

particularly computer and electronic sabotage, but I'm concerned about the effects of radically violent acts by others as they become more frustrated with the state of the world," says Ellsberg, whose first act of civil disobedience was turning over the "Pentagon Papers" to *The New York Times* in 1971. "The government is capable of turning this society into an effective police state. Computers can wire society like a pinball machine, every conversation overheard and our lives transparent to police, evoked by any actions that would legitimize such retaliation. And it's naive to think that this country isn't capable of concentration camps, torture, and the total violation of privacy."

The movement, however, is learning to use the courts to demonstrate that certain government actions are blocking the peace effort. In 1986 the Commonwealth of Massachusetts charged Amy Carter, Abbie Hoffman, and 13 other defendants, some with trespassing and others with disorderly conduct during a demonstration against CIA recruiters at the University of Massachusetts. During the 1987 trial, attorneys argued that recruitment of college stu-

dents is the Central Intelligence Agency's lifeline, providing personnel for covert and often illegal actions that counteract all peacemaking efforts.

The lawyers charged the CIA with conducting actions in Nicaragua expressly designed to systematically murder, mutilate, and torture civilian populations in order to destabilize the government. This, the attorneys said, violated public policy as well as national and international law. "We made the case more of an offense than a defense, putting the CIA on trial and proving that the government was unreasonable and excessive," says Elizabeth Tomlinson, one of the cocounselors who helped obtain the acquittal of all 15 defendants in the case. "The jury wasn't composed of rah-rah activists. They were average citizens horrified by what they heard."

The strength of the legal system will be further tested in civil lawsuits like the one filed on behalf of journalists Tony Avirgan and Martha Honey by the Christic Institute, an interfaith public-interest law firm and public-policy center. According to the affidavit, the goal is to "expose and bring to justice the secret team" smuggling weapons to Iran and the *contras*, "long funded by the sale of illegal narcotics in the United States." The documents further accuse the team of a history of political terrorism and arms trafficking funded by drug smuggling that began in Southeast Asia in the Sixties and continues today.

"On a moral, legal, and practical level, everything is interconnected," says Christic Institute executive director Sara Nelson. "Our national security increasingly depends on the security of other countries. The issue is no longer anticommunism: It's food, shelter, education, and other basics. Shedding light on illegal operations is just the beginning of finding a solution."

The personal initiatives of citizen diplomacy, however, go beyond protest and the courts. In an effort to do something about the escalating arms race and the prospect of nuclear annihilation, individuals and groups are promoting a greater and more accurate flow of information.

It is within these increased exchanges that technology is aiding the peace movement. "Ultimately citizen diplomacy could evolve into a new form of governance where the average person can take an active role in the decision-making process," says Kim Spencer, executive director of Internews, the independent television broadcasting company responsible for many SpaceBridge events.

SpaceBridges are bringing people together via huge video screens where individuals can see and speak with their counterparts. The live satellite-linked teleconferences have joined children's theaters in Minneapolis and Moscow. Others have joined such Soviet and American scientists as Robert Gale, Sagan, and Velikhov to explore the implications of the Chernobyl and Three Mile Island nuclear accidents as well as the possibility of a

U.S.—Soviet mission to Mars. More recently SpaceBridges have broadened from people-to-people exchanges to a forum among deputies of the Supreme Soviet and their equivalents in the United States Congress, including California senator Alan Cranston and congressman George Brown.

"We want to take this technology, a gift of the superpowers and a result of the space race, and utilize it to benefit human beings," Spencer says. "The very fact that SpaceBridges have happened demonstrates the potential for cooperation."

Blending citizen diplomacy with a traditional form of protest, peace walks are using technology as well as corporate management models of operation. Last summer 230 Americans joined 200 Soviets for a 450-mile journey from Leningrad to Moscow on the first Soviet-American Walk. Sponsored by International Peace Walk, Inc., the trek culminated in the first rock concert in the Soviet Union to feature performers from both countries, including Bonnie Raitt, James Taylor, and Santana, as well as the Soviet group Autograph.

"Without technology, there's no way we could have done this in the amount of time we had," says Allan Affeldt, the twenty-nine-year-old president of International Peace Walk. Using a management model that divided the project into departments—each with its own guidelines and clearly defined objectives—and computers to speed up communications and mailings, Affeldt was able to take the walk from initial mutual agreement to its actual execution in Leningrad five months later. Walkers even attended a five-day orientation with crash courses in Russian language and culture.

"We approached the walk in a way the peace movement never has before," says Affeldt, who is organizing a similar walk in the United States next summer and another in the Soviet Union next fall. "Even in our negotiations with the American embassy in Moscow, we kept them politely informed of our plans. The enemy, after all, isn't the State Department, the Heritage Foundation, or Ronald Reagan; it's their ideas and policies. It's not enough to complain; you have to provide an alternative," he adds. "We want to bring down the walls of fear and distrust and create a climate in which disarmament is possible."

The subject of peace has moved into all strata of American society: University of Notre Dame and the University of California at Berkeley, for example, offer degree programs in peace studies, and many school districts across the country have incorporated the subject into their curricula.

Socially responsible investment companies are also joining the battle. Working Assets, a San Francisco-based money-market fund, offers a special Visa card: Five cents of every member's transaction is donated to nonprofit peace groups. And the World Pax Fund, a mutual fund organized by the Methodist Board of Christian Social Concerns, screens out defense-related industries, investing money in housing, health

care, and pollution control.

Chicago's Peace Museum was founded in 1981 to bring public attention to peace issues and to disseminate information. Among its activities, the museum mounts traveling exhibits on subjects ranging from the civil rights movement to the role of popular music in social change.

Other groups are working to test the American electorate, believing it will support peace efforts. The Freeze Campaign was initially organized in 1981. The idea stemmed from "Call to Halt the Nuclear Arms Race," a paper written by Randall Forsberg. Founder of the Institute for Defense and Disarmament Studies, Forsberg stressed that the United States and the Soviet Union must "adopt a mutual freeze on the testing, production, and deployment of nuclear weapons and missiles and [on] new aircraft designed primarily to deliver nuclear weapons."

Although the Freeze Voter '84 Campaign, a political action committee, nar-

*•We should use
technology for the reduction
and elimination of
weapons on Earth and for the
problems of healing
and preserving Earth, and
use satellites
for preventive crime control.•*

rowly lost in its bid to get a national referendum on the ballot, workers demonstrated their ability to mobilize. "One of its lasting effects is the creation of an infrastructure unprecedented in the peace movement," says Forsberg. "It's engaging in a new kind of activity, moving toward dialogue, education, and consciousness-raising to bring about political change."

In 1987 Freeze officially merged with SANE (the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy), and the combined forces are now gearing up for the 1988 elections. "The joint efforts of the two groups offer the potential for a powerful organization with two dimensions: an experienced executive body with fund-raising capabilities and a strong congressional lobby, and an active mobilizing component that will pressure members of Congress and the administration at a grass-roots level," Forsberg says.

➤The American peace movement's highly decentralized status, however, is often self-defeating. Such problems as accountability, structure, management, and control—not to mention ego and politics—make it almost impossible to unite most of the grass-roots peace groups into a few major,

more powerful coalitions. Technology, however, in the form of PeaceNet, is aiding greater communication and cooperation.

The first global database and computer network for peace initiatives, PeaceNet went online in August 1986 and is now the largest progressive computer network in the world, with more than 2,000 users.

Based in San Francisco, PeaceNet features hundreds of electronic bulletin boards, computer conferences, and a comprehensive database for congressional and legislative action. Individual and group subscribers can obtain current information on worldwide activities in a matter of seconds. "The capacity to tap into this information pool and participate in the ever-growing peace community is incredibly empowering," PeaceNet director Mark Graham says. Greenpeace, SpaceWatch, the Institute for Security and Cooperation in Outer Space (ISCOS), and other peace-oriented groups provide weekly updates on their activities. Currently a nonprofit project funded by grants and gifts, PeaceNet is nearing self-sufficiency. ◀

Furthermore, approximately 200 groups are currently directing their efforts toward promoting the peaceful uses of space. "It's the key to peace on Earth," says ISCOS president Carol Rosin. "Instead of developing thousands of battle stations and satellites for war games, we should use technology for the reduction and elimination of weapons on Earth and for tracking the problems of healing, protecting, and preserving Earth. We should also use the satellites in preventive crime control and tracking troop maneuvers."

Future peace, Rosin believes, entails changing the mandate of the Strategic Defense Initiative and directing the research and development toward the enhancement and not the destruction of the human race. "We have only one chance to decide between the war game and the peace game," she says. "Once the decision is made, it will affect the future forever." Rosin is confident that even politicians will adopt the "space key to peace perspective."

Henry Kendall, chairman of the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), however, isn't as confident as Rosin. "At the moment there is no certain end to the nuclear arms race," he says. "To take the contest out of weaponry and place it at the economic and ideological level, it's going to take a series of administrations, both here and in the Soviet Union, with a much clearer view of their nations' self-interests."

Forsberg and others at the Institute for Defense and Disarmament Studies have developed the Alternative Defense Network (ADN) project, developing and comparing models for long-term policy choices. "It's a new kind of discussion that we haven't really seen before in the peace movement, a concept of looking at the longer-term future," Forsberg says.

The project's "narrowly nuclear" model is aimed at stopping the arms race now and addressing other issues later. Another

involves improving Soviet-American relations. The preferred model is "changing the role of force in politics," Forsberg says. Making superpower military rivalry obsolete, it limits the military to defense so that it would function like the Coast Guard.

Groups like Women's Action for Nuclear Disarmament (WAND) are already incorporating the ADN into their own agendas. "The ADN is a thoughtful and practical next step in redefining national security and our coexistence with the Soviet Union and the rest of the world," says WAND executive director Calien Lewis. "And it's a tool for local groups to examine and articulate a plan for a peaceful world." To that end, they are debating the ADN models in local communities to spur discussion and shape public policy.

Once world leaders agree on global disarmament, "We'll see a growth in democracy, civil liberties, and self-determination," Forsberg says. "People will assume greater responsibility for the world as a whole. We'll view our own interests not only as members of our community but also as members of an international community. There'll be a raising of political consciousness as the mass media make the world an even smaller place. And with the advancement of satellite and communications technology, people will become more immediately aware of what's going on. Covert operations will be difficult, if not impossible."

A world court, similar in many respects to *Star Trek's* United Federation of Planets, might resolve conflicts between local governments. Unlike the current world court, basically composed of figureheads, the future court would be backed by an international enforcement agency. "The brightest and most compassionate men and women and the most sophisticated computers will run this planet as a single entity, responsible for the evolution and survival of all living beings," says rock musician Graham Nash. The governing body would not be composed completely of politicians and lawyers. Scientists, physicians, and other experts would handle disputes and problems in their respective areas.

Forsberg adds that nations will use diplomacy, mediation, and other means to resolve conflicts. With growing global interdependence in trade, finance, energy, and the environment, she believes, there will be a series of organizations regulating international affairs. These will be similar to those that govern international fishing rights and the airwaves today. Overlapping responsibilities will bind them together in a kind of world government.

"My sense is that this world government will not tax people nor provide benefits," Forsberg says. "Rather, it will lighten the load of local governments and reduce taxes now earmarked for the military. There will still be as much regional autonomy as possible. Economies will still function independently, and local governments will be responsible for housing, clothing, and feeding their people. There will be, how-

ever, some transfer of funds from the richer countries to the poorer ones."

The Union of Concerned Scientists' Henry Kendall believes world peace will be modeled after the relationship between Canada and the United States, neighboring countries with different governing systems and unarmed borders. Such arrangements, he points out, would have to exist before any real reduction in armaments is even remotely contemplated.

Many believe, however, that we will never be able to change the institution of war or eliminate military threats. "What I'm working toward is a long shot," Ellsberg says. "Humanity is not going to get away with the possession of nuclear arms. We may survive a first round of nuclear war because it may not blow everything up. But that won't be the end of nuclear war, and sometime in the next generation or two it's conceivable the whole stockpile will go up."

➤ Opponents of the peace movement argue that world peace is a Utopian dream. Australian pediatrician and WAND founder Helen Caldicott, however, believes that this is an immoral argument. "It's made by the men who build the weapons and who created the arms race," she says. Founding president and now president emeritus of Physicians for Social Responsibility, Caldicott calls her peace activism "essential preventive medicine."

According to Caldicott, government disinformation and the propaganda of major corporations with international interests have brainwashed the American public. This has resulted in an American myth perpetuated by the news media and by Hollywood. "What they have imprinted into the American psyche is the equation, Free enterprise = capitalism = freedom = nationalism = patriotism = Christianity = God. The flip side amounts to equality = union = socialism = Communism = Satan," she says. "There's an urgent necessity for demythologizing the American people."

There's little argument among peace activists that a fundamental shift in values and thinking must occur within social institutions and within people themselves before any kind of peace can be achieved. And effecting such changes is perhaps the most ambitious challenge ever faced by the human race. "We're all within walking distance of our own doom," Daniel Berrigan says. "The importance of everyone doing something is crucial to the future of peace. No one is talking about one way to salvation. We're talking about human beings responding humanly to an inhuman crisis. And anybody can do things like issue leaflets, hold vigils, or just be a presence at demonstrations."

In the long run, Dwight Eisenhower said 30 years ago, people are going to do more to promote peace than governments are, echoing the beliefs of activists who want to give peace a chance. Peace will come, according to John Lennon in a 1970 press conference, only "when people realize they have the power." □

INTERVIEW

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memories of previous lives in their play and sometimes in their drawings.

Omni: Scientists usually dismiss reincarnation as some sort of wishful thinking. Yet William James noted that our desire to believe in survival after death does not automatically negate its possibility. We *do* want to believe in it, don't we?

Stevenson: No, in fact we don't. That's a misunderstanding concerning Hindus and Buddhists. They believe in it, but they don't particularly want to. Hindus see life in terms of a constant cycle of births in which we are doomed to struggle and suffer until we have reached perfection and can escape. Fear of death is almost universal; and some two thousand years ago Patanjali, an Indian sage, said it was due to our fear of having to undergo a postmortem review of our lives, to be judged and presumably be found wanting.

Omni: Your new book discusses some misconceptions about the idea of reincarnation. What is the most common?

Stevenson: The idea that reincarnation must include what Hindus call Karma, especially retributive Karma.

Omni: Retributive Karma being the idea that whatever bad you do in this life is paid for in the next by having the same amount of evil done to you?

Stevenson: Something like that. It can be more specific, so that if you put out someone's eyes, you will be blinded. There is no evidence for the idea of retributive Karma. The notion of a succession of lives with improvement in each, on the other hand, is precisely the view of the Druze, a Muslim sect of Lebanon, a people I've worked with a lot. They believe God sends us into different sorts of lives, perhaps as a fisherman, then a banker, then maybe a pirate. But in each life we should do the best we can. If a banker, one should be thoroughly honest—and rich! Whether pirate or peasant, it's all summed up at the day of judgment. But one life has nothing to do with the next. Your conduct could be vicious in one life, and in the next, you might be reborn into elegant circumstances.

Omni: In your new book you speak reprovingly of people easily persuaded by your evidence. Is your position that reincarnation can never really be demonstrated?

Stevenson: I don't think I rebuke anybody for being convinced by the evidence. All I say is that maybe they shouldn't believe on the basis of what's in that particular book, because the detailed case reports are in my other books. Essentially I say that the idea of reincarnation permits but doesn't compel belief. All the cases I've investigated so far have shortcomings. Even taken together, they do not offer anything like proof. But as the body of evidence accumulates, it's more likely that more and more people will see its relevance.

I'm not much of a missionary. Most of